

September 20, 2004

Dear Lake Enthusiast:

As you're probably aware, a state law was enacted last year that increases the Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) fee paid by boat owners. The law stipulates that one third of the total amount of money generated from the fees will be used (for the LARE program) in the same manner as it has since the inception of the original fee in 1991. Another third of the money is to be used "...by the department of natural resources to pay for lake projects, including projects to: (A) ***remove sediment***; or (B) control exotic or invasive plants or animals."

The purpose of this letter is to provide information regarding availability of grants derived from that money. Grants can only be awarded for activities involving ***public*** lakes, and to organizations having the resources and ability to properly administer the funds. This would include formally established lake associations, conservancy districts, local units of government, or other similar entities. Participation in the program requires the submittal of an application form for each program element, copies of which are available electronically on our web site at <http://www.IN.gov/dnr/soilcons> If you've received this message via e-mail, application forms are attached. If you desire, paper copies of the application forms can be mailed to you.

Traditional LARE Project Grants

Grants are available on a competitive basis for several actions that can address the ecology and management of public lakes and their watersheds. Depending on your particular lake's needs, you may want to consider applying for funds for any of the following: 1) a preliminary lake study, 2) a comprehensive lake diagnostic study, 3) an engineering feasibility study of possible pollutant control measures, 4) a design study for a specific pollutant control measure, 5) construction of a particular pollutant control measure, 6) a management plan for the lake, or 7) a performance appraisal of a constructed pollutant control measure.

The deadline for submittal of applications for these types of projects is January 31, 2005. Grants for approved projects will be awarded in July 2005.

Sediment Removal Plan Development or Sediment Removal Grants

Following several forums during which public guidance was solicited, the State Soil Conservation Board adopted policies regarding the manner in which a third of the LARE funds is to be used for sediment removal or exotic species control. A copy of those policies is attached if you received this message via e-mail, or is available on our web site or through postal mail.

A specific application form is attached (or available) for lake organizations interested in applying for funds to be used to contract for the production of a ***sediment removal plan*** or, if such a plan has already been prepared, for funds to be used for a ***sediment removal project***. Having a sediment removal ***plan*** is a prerequisite to acquiring grant funds for actual sediment ***removal*** projects. The deadline for submittal of the applications is November 30, 2004. The State Soil Conservation Board will determine which applications will be funded at its March 2005 meeting.

Exotic Plant or Animal Control Grants

Grant funds were made available earlier this year for the development of aquatic plant ***management plans***. For organizations that did not apply for grants at that time, an application form is attached (or available) for funds to be used to contract for the production of such a plan. Having an aquatic plant ***management plan*** is a prerequisite to acquisition of grant funds for actual ***plant control***. For organizations that already have (or will have) an approved plan in place, the same application form can be used to apply for actual aquatic plant control, based on the plan's recommendations.

The deadline for submittal of exotic plant-related applications is December 31, 2004. The State Soil Conservation Board will determine which applications will be funded at its March 2005 meeting.

Since some of these elements are new to the LARE program, we fully expect that there will be many questions about the grant offering and welcome thoughtful ideas regarding ways in which the process can be improved as various aspects of the program evolve. It is our desire to make the program as accessible and simple as possible, so please do not hesitate to communicate freely with us if you have questions or comments. We can be contacted at 317/233-3870 or by e-mail at jray@dnr.state.in.us.

Sincerely,

James K. Ray
Chief
Lakes, Rivers and Watersheds
Division of Soil Conservation